

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

11/19/82
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AH 16

TO : Political Files
Amembassy Buenos Aires

FROM : POL - Townsend B. Friedman

SUBJECT: A Reported Disappearance

DATE: January 19, 1982

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part (X) In Full

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

■ - Entire Text.

Today I received Mrs. Nelly Cevallos de Rodriguez. Mrs. Rodriguez states that her son, Daniel Eduardo Rodriguez, 23 years old, has been missing since December 4. On December 12 she filed a habeas corpus for him.

Mrs. Rodriguez stated that she came to the Embassy after she received an anonymous phone call January 14. The male caller stated that her son was "arrested by mistake." She should "look for him in La Plata Prison, if he has not been moved already." The caller reportedly went on to say, "get in touch with the human rights people at the U.S. Embassy; they are the only ones who can help." Mrs. Rodriguez said that she had a natural skepticism about anonymous calls but in the circumstances felt that the only thing to do was to follow-up as the caller suggested.

Mrs. Rodriguez stated that on December 9 she went to the Fourth District Police Commissary -- one of the many she called on in her search for her son. She explained the purpose of her call, described her son, gave his name and asked if he was there to the receptionist (la guardia). He replied, without consulting any papers, that her son was indeed in the jail. She left to report this to her friends, who were sitting outside. They went in and provided the guard with the same information. The receptionist said the same thing. However, when Mrs. Rodriguez got inside and spoke to an officer, the latter, after checking his papers, denied that her son was a prisoner. On leaving,



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they told the receptionist this and he said, "I must have been mistaken."

The habeas corpus filed by her attorney refers to this incident. It also states that "extra official inquiries by serious persons confirm that Rodriguez is really under arrest but do not state where." Mrs. Rodriguez says that she does not know about extra official inquiries. She speculates that perhaps the lawyer made his own investigation, but also told me that he filed the habeas corpus the day after she approached him. He obviously would have had to act very quickly. She speculates that the lawyer may have made this up.

Mrs. Rodriguez states that she has checked at hospitals and at the morgue without finding her son. The habeas corpus petition proved negative -- according to her lawyer. He did not check outside the Federal Capital in Buenos Aires Province. He asked for another lavish fee to do so (I think she mentioned 10,000,000 pesos). She said she did not have money to do so.

Mrs. Rodriguez repeated that her son had no political involvement. He had been working as an aid to the bookkeeper at a firm which went bust about six months ago. Since that time he had been driving a cab. She said that he and his wife were on excellent terms -- they were about to close on a new apartment at the time he disappeared.

COMMENT: For most of our conversation, Mrs. Rodriguez was very composed. She did not give me many details about her search for her son. In fact, in our first conversation she neglected to mention that reported conversation at the Fourth Commissary as well as the allegation that sources state that he is in detention. I had to call her back to discuss them. Her vagueness about where the lawyer got his information is surprising. On the other hand, people in her situation are sometimes vague and confused -- she, though, mixes precision with vagueness. I could not get her to clarify where she came upon the name of the lawyer she used. She said that neighbors had suggested him to her. The habeas corpus petition that the boy is being held by the police, the Interior Ministry or the Army Command is a cheeky one for just any lawyer to make. To me, that is the strangest item of all. Yet she says she has not been in touch with human rights organizations.

I told Mrs. Rodriguez we would do what we can to be helpful.

[REDACTED]
CLEARED: POLCOUNS: JFKing *AF*

cc: AMB
DCM

ARA/SC
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